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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to direct graduate students enrolled in an Educational Leadership program during 1999 and 2000 to achieve three standards with performance outcomes and attributes of evidence and to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses found in the implementation of each standard. The study involved 40 graduates enrolled in a summer session and 55 enrolled in a spring session. The three standards stated that, on completion of course requirements, the graduate should be able to: (1) use an eclectic philosophical approach in assuming various leadership roles, and make decisions based on pertinent theories of educational leadership; (2) discuss how developmental differences in learners vary according to age groups; and (3) demonstrate a rationale for designing curricula with provisions for accommodating different modalities of learning. The first standard was demonstrated by graduates enrolled in a principalship class through simulated activities that included setting priorities and analyzing case studies. The second standard was demonstrated in a panel presentation by six graduates who reviewed materials from the literature related to age differences in learning. The third standard was also demonstrated through research and video presentations related to teaching styles and learning modes and modalities. An analysis of these activities demonstrated the usefulness of cooperative learning in small groups and the importance of activities that support educational theories learned by the participants. (SLD)

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ASSESSING PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES IN COMPLEX AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM FOR GRADUATES IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

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Professors in Educational Leadership programs have in the past utilized performance based outcomes as a partial means of assessing degrees to which graduate students have reached pre-set standards and objectives. Additionally, a significant number of accreditating agencies and state boards of education are moving toward performance based assessment. Difficulty in selecting suitable attributes of evidence supporting these outcomes has been a prevailing problem in complex areas of the graduate curriculum. One problematic area was found in curriculum development; another in problem-solving within an administrative framework.

The purpose of this study was to direct graduates enrolled in an Educational Leadership program during the 1999 Summer Session and Spring of 2000 to (1) pilot three standards with performance outcomes and attributes of evidence, and (2) to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses found in the implementation of each.

The methodology in this study involved 40 graduates, enrolled in a secondary education curriculum class during the 1999 Summer Session. Fifty-five graduates enrolled in an elementary/secondary principalship class, Spring Semester 2000, also were included in the study.

The three standards with performance objectives and attributes of evidence were selected as follows.

The candidate, upon completion of course requirements, should be able to:

(1) use an eclectic philosophical approach in assuming various leadership roles, and make decisions based on pertinent theories of educational leadership.

(2) discuss how developmental differences in the learners vary according to age groups.

(3) have acquired a rationale for designing curricula with provisions for accommodating different modalities of learning.

The results of the study revealed that a standard, involving ability of graduates to design curricula for a heterogeneous class of students, may well be evidenced by panels of graduates presenting characteristics of "human growth and development". "Diversity in learning styles" can effectively be taught using video tapes and activities in small groups. It was also found that standards and performance objectives relating to educational leadership can effectively be evidenced by using prioritizing simulations and analysis of case studies requiring decisions based on administrative theory. These and other suitable attributes were examined and reflected upon in the study.

The first standard was applicable to performance skills and was demonstrated by the graduates enrolled in an elementary/secondary principalship class. Using simulated activities, the graduates were required to prioritize mail and telephone messages left for a beginning principal during a week of his absence prior to the opening of school. These activities were followed by problematic analyses of hypothetical case studies, with possible solutions discussed by the graduates. The proposed solutions were based on an administrative theoretical framework.

The second standard involved an identification of developmental differences in learners as they vary according to age groups. This performance was evidenced by a two-hour panel presentation by six graduates. Each graduate presented parts of a computer slide presentation with material selected from classical articles compiled in a text. The articles reviewed included studies by of Havighurst, Ausubel, Kohlberg, and others. Each person in the class received an outline of the presentation to use as a guide. The panel presentation culminated in a question and answer-type discussion.

The third objective was also evidenced by researching articles compiled in a text; and from current video presentations relating to different teaching styles, learning modes, and modalities. The format for this performance included relevant activities, which were appropriate for class participation in small groups. These activities appeared to be effective in assisting the graduates to grasp concepts and form generalizations. The generalizations in turn initiated broad discussion.

The following reflections from this study provided insight regarding the format of both classes:

(1) Direct instruction should be altered with cooperative learning in small groups.

(2) Discussion is more effective when initiated in small groups; then opened to the full class.

(3) Participation in appropriate activities by graduate students of theory definitely enhance practical learning.

(4) Panel presentations provide an opportunity not only to vary instruction, but also allow for individuals to display their expertise in knowledge and cognition.

(5) Analyses of case studies is an effective means of implementing theory.

(6) This study supports the premise found in the literature that teachers in secondary schools generally teach as they have been taught.

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